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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 05 TEL AVIV 002140

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

Please note: no Israel Media Reaction Monday, April 12,
Last Day of Passover holiday.

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Iraq

[1](#)2. Mideast

Key stories in the media:

Iraq and the American entanglement continued dominating the Israeli press. All media reported about the two East Jerusalem Israeli-Arabs who were kidnapped in Iraq. The two were apparently working for a North Carolina aid organization (RTI), which won a contract from USAID for rehabilitation of the local government in Iraq. The kidnapping opens a debate in Israel regarding Israel's responsibility towards East Jerusalem Palestinian residents. Israel Radio reported that the P.A. promised to try and assist the two hostages. The media also reported about the kidnapping of Japanese citizens, a Canadian and a UK citizen.

Israel radio quoted Secretary of State Colin Powell as telling a Senate subcommittee that the U.S. does not now plan to cut loan guarantees to Israel because of the barrier it is building through Palestinian areas in the West Bank.

All media reported that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has formally asked the Likud election chief to set the party's referendum on his unilateral disengagement plan before the end of this month. The unexpected move has angered the right-wing faction in the Likud party, which claims that PM Sharon is using this holiday month (many national speeches) and the coming visit to Washington in order to assist him win the referendum.

All media cited from NSA Condoleezza Rice testimony before the commission investigating the 9/11 terror attacks. Rice defended the administration against the allegations made by Richard Clarke charging that President George Bush had failed to take threats of an al-Qaida attack seriously.

Jpost reported that the National Unity Coalition for Israel, an umbrella group representing millions of Christians across the U.S., have issued an "Action Alert" against PM Sharon's disengagement plan.

Leading media cited Abdel Aziz Rantisi, the new Hamas leader, calling for the formation of a "national salvation government" consisting of representatives of all Palestinian factions.

In an interview to Yediot Minister Of Defense Shaul Mofaz said that the U.S.'s victory in Iraq is essential for world peace.

Ha'aretz reported that the IDF has lately changed its policy and stopped returning the bodies of armed Palestinians killed in clashes with security forces to their families and started burying them in Israel. The decision was made as a mean of deterrence and the will to have negotiating cards for worst-case scenarios.

Ha'aretz quoted Hamas' spokesmen as saying that despite ongoing negotiations between them and P.A. officials they have no intention joining the P.A. in its current constellation.

Ha'aretz exclusively interviewed a Syrian intelligence officer, an ex-spy against Israel, as revealing that

Syria has details and photos on the Dimona nuclear reactor.

Maariv and Ha'aretz reported that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has cancelled its scheduled participant in the Israeli Space Agency's convention next month due to what seems to be security concerns. The Minister of Science and Technology Eliezer (Modi) Sandberg was quoted as saying that this was a political decision.

Roni Shaked interviewed P.A. Chairman Yasser Arafat for Yediot. In the interview Arafat declared that he is willing to have an immediate cease-fire and renew negotiations.

1. Iraq:

Summary:

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "The degree of American success will be determined not only by military plans, but also in keeping with the way in which the Americans will try to prevent a joint Sunni-Shiite uprising. A continued increase in the number of casualties among the Iraqi civilian population will make it harder and harder for the Americans to achieve this objective."

Chief Economic Editor and senior columnist Sever Plotker wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The American determination in Vietnam paid off; the Soviet leadership was convinced it couldn't forcefully impose communism on Asia. It is not certain that this will happen in Iraq."

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote in Ha'aretz: "If I were in [President Bush's] shoes, I'd send Saddam Hussein back to Iraq. He would know how to organize the mess in no time."

U.S. expert and Middle East lecturer Professor Ethan Gilboa wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "In the U.S. the pressure on Bush is growing to face his people and the world in order to explain what he intends to do beyond saying the known and worn cliché: 'we will not let terror win'."

Block Quotes:

1. "The Iraqi Mud, The Israeli Concern"

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (April 9): "Israel cannot sit by indifferently in the face of the current events in Iraq. Key individuals who are dealing with the future of the region ... concur that the results of the military campaign in Iraq will also influence Israel and will also have an effect on the degree of security felt by countries in the region over the coming years.... It is common belief in Israel that an intensification in the fighting could lead to a civil war and an attempt on the part of the Iranians to intervene and replace the Americans.... As U.S. elections draw closer, the more effort the radical elements in Iraq will make to strike at the American forces, cause more casualties and intensify their guerrilla and terror war.... The degree of American success will be determined not only by military plans, but also in keeping with the way in which the Americans will try to prevent a joint Sunni-Shiite uprising. A continued increase in the number of casualties among the Iraqi civilian population will make it harder and harder for the Americans to achieve this objective."

2. "Facing a New War"

Chief Economic Editor and senior columnist Sever Plotker wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (April 9): "Without intending to do so, the U.S. soldiers found themselves facing a battle not against Saddam's junky army but against the Muslim jihad army.... If they surrender, give-up, they will pave the way before the jihad brigades to Riyadh, Doha and Amman. As it seems, the comparison between Iraq and Vietnam is not exaggerated. In Vietnam the Americans tried to stop the Soviet communism, In Iraq they are trying to stop the Muslim jihadism. The American determination in Vietnam paid off; the Soviet leadership was convinced it couldn't forcefully impose communism on Asia. It is not certain that this will

happen in Iraq."

13. "Organizing the Mess"

Senior columnist and longtime dove Yoel Marcus wrote in Ha'aretz (April 9): "The resemblance between our invasion of Lebanon and America's invasion of Iraq is amazing. Our soldiers were welcomed with cheers and rice; their soldiers were greeted with shouts of joy and the smashing of Saddam statues. We wanted to create a new order in Lebanon; they wanted to create a new order in Iraq. Within a short time, in our case and theirs, the Shiites woke up and the invading armies became targets of attack. Commissions of inquiry were appointed, in Israel and America. Both here and there, they called it another Vietnam. We pulled out without achieving a thing, and Bush is still in there, mired in a sea of blood from which no good will come. If I were in his shoes, I'd send Saddam Hussein back to Iraq. He would know how to organize the mess in no time."

14. "Leave the Clich Behind"

U.S. expert and Middle East lecturer Professor Ethan Gilboa wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (April 9): "If the situation in Iraq would cause Bush's failure in the coming elections, the 'Spain syndrome' might strengthen: terror that is followed by exchange of leaders in countries that supported the war. This syndrome might reach Blair in Britain, Berlusconi in Italy and other leaders who supported the U.S. This outcome might encourage all Islamic terror factions to mock the weak western liberal democracies and to enhance their efforts to hurt them.... This week Bush left to his Easter vacation in his farm in Texas but this is no time for vacation but for hard work. Bush should recruit all forces -- including the EU and the UN -- for an effort to stabilize Iraq. In the U.S. the pressure on Bush is growing to face his people and the world in order to explain what he intends to do beyond saying the known and worn clich: 'we will not let terror win'."

12. Mideast:

Summary:

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "[PM Sharon's] insistence that Israeli actions be completely unilateral will eventually lead to increasing international involvement, which could get Israel entangled in imposed solutions."

Block Quotes:

"Beware of International Involvement"

Senior columnist and chief defense commentator Zeev Schiff wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (April 9): "It turns out that the person whose awareness has been most affected in the terrorist war of the past two years is Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Proof of this is his decision to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, a unilateral step because, he says, Israel has no Palestinian partner. But his insistence that Israeli actions be completely unilateral will eventually lead to increasing international involvement, which could get Israel entangled in imposed solutions."

LEBARON